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War Protests 'Enraged' LBJ

Says Former Consultant of '65 Arts Festival

NEW YORK (AP) — Protests against the Vietnam war generated by a White House arts festival moved President Johnson to a state of rage against all artists and intellectuals, said a former special consultant to the President.

And when poet Robert Lowell turned down an invitation to the 1965 festival, "the roar in the Oval Office could be heard all the way into the East Wing," Eric F. Goldman, a Princeton University history professor, said.

Goldman also reported in an article in the January Harper's magazine that the President ordered a press "blackout" of the festival. Goldman added that Mrs. Johnson ordered him to ask author John Hersey not to read passages from Hersey's book "Hiroshima."

Goldman, who served as a special consultant to Johnson from 1964 to 1966, called the festival an "unmitigated disaster" that "added bricks to the wall between the President and these groups" of intellectuals.

After Lowell refused his invitation and a telegram from 20 other intellectuals was received supporting the poet's action, the President's "rage . . . found a broader target," Goldman wrote.

"He was making few distinctions between responsible and petty critics of his foreign policy, even between those who were pro- and anti-Vietnam. He was furious at 'these people,' all of them who had insulted him and the office of the presidency," Goldman said.

Goldman added that the President began to refer to all intellectuals as "not only 'sonofabitches,' but 'fools,' and . . . close to traitors."

At one point, Goldman said, Johnson said privately, "Don't they know I'm the only President they've got and a war is on?"

The historian, who organized the festival as part of his two-year assignment at the White House, criticized both the President and his intellectual critics for their behavior at the festival.

"I had seen a President reacting with arrogant know-nothingism, and influential figures in the cultural world reacting with an equally arrogant know-it-allness," he said.

The magazine article, titled "The White House and the Intellectuals," was adapted from Goldman's soon to be published book, "The Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson."

Goldman said Mrs. Johnson asked him to have Hersey read from a book other than "Hiroshima" during a luncheon in the presidential family's private quarters.

He quoted the First Lady as saying: "The President is being criticized as a bloody warmonger. He can't have writers coming here and denouncing him, in his own house, as a man who wants to use nuclear bombs."

Goldman said he refused to make the request to Hersey, and Hersey did read from "Hiroshima," with a preface saying he meant it as a warning that "wars have a way of getting out of hand."

While Wyoming was still a territory in 1869, women were given full voting rights. When it was admited to the Union in 1890, it became the first state with women's suffrage. Colorado followed in 1893.